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SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECHES
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY DUNDAS,
ON
HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE
FOR DECLINING TO TREAT AT PRESENT WITH FRANCE;
AND
HIS OBJECTIONS TO AN INQUIRY INTO THE LATE
EXPEDITION TO HOLLAND.
WITH
A PREFACE,
TOUCHING BRIEFLY ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS.

"The OBJECT of THE WAR, I can state in ONE WORD!

" It is—SECURITY!"

Mr. PITT's *Speech on Monday, Feb. 13, 1800.*

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SUBSTANCE

STEECHES

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

ALFRED DUBOIS

OF

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

MEMBER FOR THE DISTRICT OF BIRMINGHAM

AND

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

ON THE CONDITION OF THE

WITNESSES

A PAMPHLET

FOR THE USE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINTED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

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1860-1861

PREFACE.

THE two following SPEECHES of Mr. DUNDAS having excited universal admiration, for their manliness of argument—for their acuteness, and perspicuity—leading every dispassionate mind to conviction, “*as to the National Danger of Opening a Negotiation for Peace with Bonaparte; and opposing an Enquiry into the late Expedition to Holland;*” their publication, in this form, must be very acceptable to every friend of rational Freedom: as the one clearly demonstrates the grounds upon which the war is to be continued; as the other shews that the Dutch expedition led to British security—to British glory! and, by not inundating Holland, was

a generous proof of British humanity ! and the sacred regard which Great Britain shews to the REAL emancipation of mankind, from the fetters of an accursed slavery ; seductive and fascinating to the ignorant, because, with the most impudent hypocrisy, it assumes the name of Liberty ! The old Goths and Vandals did not come, like Satan to our Saviour, as the new Goths and Vandals have done to a deluded universe ; preaching to the people on the top of their MOUNT of ANARCHY ! that if they would forsake their GOD, and fall down and worship them, they would instantly enjoy every sub-lunary bliss ! No ! They conquered for existence ! The French conquer for extermination. They are an immense band of Wolves, and Tigers, and Hyænas, *masked in the shape of Man*, that issue forth from France, as from their DEN,—*to desolate the human race !*

It is to prevent such desolation, that PROVIDENCE has raised up Mr. PITT and Mr. DUNDAS, as the SELECTED CHIEFS OF SOCIAL ORDER, under a PATRIOT KING, to secure the Liberties of Britons ! Nay, to re-establish the RELIGIOUS, the MORAL, and the POLITICAL RIGHTS OF MAN !

And, in such a warfare, their task has

been not more arduous than admirable. For, if ever there were a crisis which demanded all the energies of man "to BREAST the TIDE of JACOBINICAL POWER," as Mr. PITT so sublimely expressed that impending deluge which still threatens to overflow the human mind with error! and the world with blood!—it is the present moment!

As the misled and factious folly of *City clamour* about PEACE *without* SECURITY, may agitate for a moment, or rather delude other communities, to meet and vote for an *insecure* Peace; and, by that means, overwhelm us with *future destruction*! we cannot more properly BREAST this TIDE of *factious clamour*, than by quoting Mr. PITT's unanswerable and beautiful reply to Mr. TIERNEY's question, "calling upon Ministers to state the "OBJECT of the War, IN ONE SENTENCE!"

"The Honourable Gentleman (said Mr. PITT) calls upon Ministers to state the "OBJECT of the War IN ONE SENTENCE. I "can state it in ONE WORD! It is

"SECURITY!

"I can thus state it in ONE WORD, though it "is not to be explained but IN MANY. The

“ object of the war is SECURITY ; security
“ against a danger the greatest that ever
“ threatened this country ! the greatest that
“ ever threatened mankind !—A danger the
“ more terrible, because it is unexampled and
“ novel ! It is a danger which has more than
“ menaced the safety and independence of all
“ nations. *It is a danger which has attacked*
“ *the* PROPERTY and PEACE of ALL INDIVIDU-
“ ALS !—A danger which Europe has strained
“ all its sinews to repel ; and which no nation
“ has so successfully repelled as the British !
“ because no other nation has acted so ener-
“ getically, so sincerely, so uniformly, on the
“ broad basis of

“ PRINCIPLE !

“ Because no other nation has perceived, with
“ equal clearness and decision, the necessity,
“ not only of combating

“ THE EVIL ABROAD !

“ but of stifling it

“ AT HOME !

“ Because no nation has *breasted*, with so firm
 “ a constancy, the *tide* of *Jacobinical* power !
 “ Because no nation has *scrutinized* and *pierced*,
 “ with so *stedfast* an eye, as the Government
 “ of Great Britain, through all the *disguising*
 “ *manœuvres* of *Jacobinical* hypocrisy !”

This incontrovertible, clear, and convinc-
 ing definition of the OBJECT of THE WAR,
 ought to be ATTENTIVELY PERUSED by every
 member of the British Empire ! *by every mem-*
ber of Civil Society throughout the earth !
 The above, and the two following nervous
 speeches of Mr. DUNDAS, *will calm all mens’*
minds, allay all fears, defeat all factious arts ;
and brace up the British HEART to the CONTI-
NUANCE of a War, solely undertaken for the
 SECURITY of their LIBERTIES and their
 RIGHTS !

And the War, if followed up with ENERGY
 and SYSTEM in the next Campaign, is near a
conclusion ! Whether the *Corfican* CROMWELL,
 who has completely destroyed the *Representa-*
tive Government, that great *Doric* pillar of
 Revolution !—whether he will be induced to
change the ORDER of the Political Architecture
 to its OLD CORINTHIAN ; or whether he will
 succeed, for a time, in forming a *new Compo-*
site of his own ; still NO ORDER there can be

permanent, beautiful, just and secure for France! for Britain! and for the World!—but the ROYAL BOURBON CORINTHIAN! And the disappointed, tortured, jaded mind of that disconsolate, distracted and impoverished nation, too feelingly MURMURS it; *if she dare not yet OPENLY PROCLAIM IT!*

What MONTESQUIEU said of the English, in their attempts to *fix* a Republic upon a permanent basis, after the murder of their Sovereign CHARLES I. is *strictly applicable to the present state* of France. The similitude is wonderful, if we except one point; *that the ENGLISH*, in their attempt at revolutionizing *themselves*, never once entertained an idea of revolutionizing *other* nations!

MONTESQUIEU remarks, that “ A very curious spectacle it was, in the last century, “ to behold the *impotent* efforts the English “ made for the establishment of Democracy; “ as those who had a share in the direction of “ public affairs were void of all virtue; as “ their ambition was inflamed by the success “ of CROMWELL, the most daring of their “ members; *as the spirit of a faction was suppressed* only by that of a *succeeding* faction; “ the Government was *continually changing!* “ The people, *amazed at so many* Revolutions,

“ fought *every where* for a *Democracy*, without being able to find it ! At length, after a series of *tumultuary motions* and *violent shocks*, they were OBLIGED to have RECOURSE to the VERY GOVERNMENT which they had so ODI-
“ OUSLY PROSCRIBED !”

FRANCE is, in the same manner, approaching to her last stage of REVOLUTIONARY INSANITY ! *Civism* is now exiled from all power ! —for the depot of all Gallic power is now vested, by violence, in a *Military Despot* ! Thus it was, in this country, during the fantastic reign of the fanatic Republic of England. *The Revolutionary Wheel went round* ! And, after revolving to the tremendous, but upstart despotism of ONE *Military Man*, the people found more consolation, and afterwards more certain SECURITY, in withdrawing their allegiance from the *unlimited Usurper of the day*, to their former limited HEREDITARY MONARCHY.

It would exceed the boundaries of a Preface, were we now to go into any detail, in pointing out minutely, the wonderful coincidence between the affairs in France in 1800, and the affairs of Britain, from and after, the reign of CROMWELL. But, without at present detailing it, every reader of History must perceive that the comparison is almost strictly

similar. France is now governed by A PUBLIC MILITARY DESPOT, who can *controul*; and, at the same time, is controuled by Private Boards of General Officers! Thus the *publicity* and the *privacy* of Military Despotism, in a country where the *Rights of Citizens!* of *Liberty*, and *Equality*, *crimsoned* the soil for years, has entirely *vanished*! There is *no* Citizen now in France! For the *Military Despots* have destroyed that very *Civic Crown* by which the *sanguinary* CITIZEN was distinguished, during the *democratic*, and the *representative* æra of RUIN, and of BLOOD!

Yet there is something *greatly consoling* in THIS CHANGE of power. For the CITIZEN is much more cruel in administering Revolutionary Power, and much more irregular and unjust, than the rigid but well-disciplined SOLDIER. Although it is highly proper not to treat with the *insidious*, the *unfaithful*, and the *profligate* BONAPARTE—the *Mahometan!* the *Catholic!* the *Infidel!* the *Impostor!*—it is now consoling to the World, that Tyranny in France has assumed, at last, A MILITARY FORM! So it was in England, previous to the RESTORATION. The people were not sorry that the axe of power was wrested from the hands of the intriguing, but cruel and dastardly, CITIZEN, by the disciplined and brave SOL-

DIER. But the Soldier's discipline being *more severe*, than the *mild* Prerogative of the MONARCH; the people *sighed* and *panted* for their OLD MONARCHY!—*limited by Law*;—and *upheld by MERCY, JUSTICE, and HONOUR*!—*They RESTORED their LEGITIMATE SOVEREIGN*!

The people in France *have now a similar feeling*! And would it not be madness in Ministers, under such circumstances, to treat with an *ephemeral Despot*; when any such Treaty, if concluded, *would ultimately REVOLUTIONIZE THE BRITISH EMPIRE*? Peace, now, would be the *Father of French Fraternity* HEREAFTER! A *Republican Peace* would be *future Ruin*! For,

“ We have SCOTCH'D the snake—NOT KILL'D it!

“ She'll CLOSE, and BE HERSELF!”—

If we, now, *make Peace*!—PEACE! with *such* a man, too, as BONAPARTE—the *unfeeling* and the *unprincipled* Usurper of the Day!—A man, as Mr. DUNDAS energetically remarked, “ Who blasphemes his God, and “ cruelly oppresses his fellow-creatures!”—Again, says Mr. DUNDAS, “ There is not a “ *single case* on record, in which he has “ *not violated* his faith!” Again. “ In all

“ *catalogue of his crimes, I can prove that he
 “ himself has been the actor in the principal
 “ parts! from the impulse of his own mind,
 “ and the dictates of his own conscience! And,
 “ in all his actions, he has conducted himself
 “ in utter contempt of Faith and Friendship!”*

Could PEACE with *such a Man*, therefore, be SECURE? It would only delude BRITANNIA, to drop her sword, that she might expose herself, UNARMED, to *Jacobinical assassination!*

The fever of France has greatly abated: But still she speaks *low and tremulous*, in her return to REASON!—For her days of *delirium*, thank GOD! are *nearly expired!* She thus whispers generous BRITANNIA! “ Oh, thou
 “ appointed by the ALMIGHTY, to protect
 “ the Morals, the Rights, and the Freedom
 “ of Man! *do not sheath thy sword*, when thou
 “ hast ALMOST VANQUISHED *the common enemy*
 “ of the Earth! The universe has no liberal
 “ and magnanimous PROTECTOR but THEE!
 “ Then do not throw away thy Sword, when
 “ the Foe is nearly prostrate! For, *if he once*
 “ *recovers his former position*, he will desolate
 “ *the world!*”

TO PREVENT THIS DESOLATION, is the Patriot Object of Ministers. *Jacobinism* is now writhing in its last agonies! But the Snake

must be *killed*, before the PEACE of Society can be made SECURE ! And the *pacific agitators* of the present moment, must be vigilantly watched. For they are the crafty *Physicians* of the dying Snake ! And they are now artfully endeavouring to *administer*, for his *recovery*, their well-known *sanguinary* Popular Nostrums, of *Delusion*, *Disaffection*, and *Destruction* !

But, to be SECURE, we must *bruise* the *head* of the *Serpent*. We have too long been drifted down the rapid torrent of social disorganization ! And, as we have now, by courage and perseverance, reached, at last, a very safe creek ; let us not be attracted again into the fascinating current ; to be precipitated over this immense cataract of calamity ! this vast *Niagara* of human ruin ! *without one bold to save us !*

From the clear and forcible definition of Mr. PITT, that the War is CONTINUED *only* to *insure* SECURITY !—From the just portrait that Mr. DUNDAS, in the following admirable Speech, draws of BONAPARTE, and the *state of France*—every intelligent reader, who is not infected with *Jacobin* principles, will exclaim, with SEMPRONIUS,

“ My Voice is *still* for WAR ! ”

In ushering into notice the two following Speeches of Mr. DUNDAS, it cannot but be pleasing to every CONSTITUTIONAL READER, to give a slight sketch of his CHARACTER, as an Orator; and, what is much better, of his WORTH as a MAN!—Of a Man who has PROVED himself ONE of the GREAT PILLARS of BRITISH FREEDOM! Nay, of CIVIL SOCIETY *itself*! In the greatest conflict that ever seduced and convulsed *an agonizing World*!

His FAMILY have, for ages, been so much distinguished at the Scotch Bar, for their eloquence, as to obtain the highest honours in the Law there, that the SOVEREIGN could bestow. But Mr. DUNDAS, independent of all family connection, has risen, like Mr. PITT, to all his well-earned honours, entirely by the force of his own sterling abilities. Although bred to the Bar, and practising long at the Bar, he betrays nothing of that dry, petty precision of the subtle word-twisting pleader; but displays all the liberal and manly eloquence that can spring from a great mind! By a sort of intuition, he sees, in a moment, the true point of view of the most difficult question: Yet, with this perceptive faculty, he gives his opinion, unadorned with any other gew-gaw of language, than

that which ought to adorn the lips of a plain but accomplished Gentleman—whose aim is to be clearly understood, that he may convince by truths; not that he may confuse, by beautiful but fallacious tropes; in order to mislead the Nation from the true and only point in which any great question ought to be viewed. With all this plainness, clearness, and closeness of reasoning, however, he has a vast command of humour.—But he seldom uses it. When he does, it is always, in the player's phrase, sure to TELL! Besides, he spontaneously throws it out, not in a sardonic smile; but in the most good-humoured, liberal laugh: It offends no one, and pleases every one. He has, too, those OPEN, and GENEROUS, and RICH QUALITIES OF THE HEART; that men of all parties admire his CANDOUR, and esteem his CONDUCT. He has ever acted OPENLY, and BOLDLY, for the HONOUR of HIS KING; and for the TRUE INTERESTS of his COUNTRY. He has given his ABLE and his MANLY support to the admirable administration of Mr. PITT, during a War which has CONVULSED SOCIETY!—A War which has almost, in the words of SHAKESPEARE, “*Shook our Isle from its propriety!*”

To enter, here, into a detail of Mr. DUN-

DAS's political and private character, would swell a volume. ALL HIS PUBLIC ACTIONS HAVE BEEN WISE. ALL HIS PRIVATE ACTIONS, HONOURABLE, BENEVOLENT, SOCIAL, AND KIND. He has ever had THE GLORY OF BRITAIN in view, and the REAL HAPPINESS of MANKIND!

He has that dignified mind, that all the petulant arts of the OPPONENTS of SOCIAL ORDER can never ruffle. Like a great General in the Field, he is always collected and cool. And he has this wonderful felicity of eloquence, the result of an ardent and sound understanding, and a liberal manliness of heart; that ALL PARTIES listen with the most PROFOUND ATTENTION to the CLEAR and CANDID Speeches of Mr. DUNDAS.



MR. DUNDAS'S SPEECH,

ON

MOVING THE ADDRESS TO

HIS MAJESTY,

On Monday, February 3, 1800.

SIR,

HAVING been a firm supporter of the conduct of his Majesty's Government, during the whole course of this war, for the liberty, nay, existence of the British Empire, it will not be thought extraordinary if I shall move an Address, approving of that correspondence which has been just read, so far as it respects the administration of this country. With respect, Sir, to what has passed in consequence of the overtures from France, which gave rise to the present question, in the answers thereto returned, I certainly cannot claim any share of the merit thereto attached, having been absent, and in the country, when the particular measures which were thereupon adopted were concluded upon by the rest of his Majesty's Ministers; but in making the motion which I am now about to do, *I put in my claim, not only to a share of all its demerits, but of all the merits and responsibility also which attach to it, in common with all the rest of his Majesty's advisers upon that occasion.*

Sir, on this subject I shall trouble the House with some observations ; but I hope the obvious nature of the subject will not induce a necessity that I shall trouble it long. It is a subject which it is impossible for us to consider, without adverting to the *circumstances and situation in which we are placed, as decisive of the conduct which we ought to pursue*. We are *not now* at that stage of the business, when we are at liberty to bring forward *opinion*, and conclude from *theory and speculation*. *Experience has decided the question* ; and, thanks to it, we are not at this moment called upon to dispute on the merits of the French revolution, whether it be that *glorious and stupendous work of human wisdom* which some have fondly conceived and imagined it ; or *whether it be a transaction which has produced more mischief, horror, and devastation, than the political history of the world affords !* I do hope, I say, that we are *not now* at that period of time when it becomes necessary to *substantiate this assertion by argument* ; for I see no person rising to justify the principles and practice of the French revolution, I say not in this House ; if it still has its admirers out of it, no doubt they must be among those who have taken part with it from the beginning, and rejoiced in all its horrors. Sir, in considering the question before us, I must call the attention of the House to the leading principles of that revolution, whatever form or shape it may assume. I do not, however, mean to enter into a detail of circumstances on this point. *Experience has saved me the trouble* ; for I state it as an *undeniable fact*, that the leading feature of the French revolution, illustrated by the uniform tenor of its conduct to foreign states, is a total disregard for all treaties and obliga-

tions, and a sovereign contempt for the rights and privileges of other powers. If it were necessary to adduce a proof, I should refer merely to one transaction.

I will, Sir, mention that odious and *abominable decree* of the 19th Nov. 1792, which decree *has been uniformly followed up by every succeeding government in France, by a uniformity of conduct pregnant with aggression, an utter disregard of all treaties, and a most sovereign contempt for the usages and customs of all other nations.* This, Sir, I well know; and if any gentleman disputes the fact, I can produce the most indubitable proofs of it. Since the passing of that decree, Sir, the French people and its government have been continually at war with almost every nation in Europe. And as to those who have *not* actually been engaged, it has been with *the greatest difficulty they have been able to keep out of it.* I will beg leave, Sir, to enumerate those with whom the French government have been actually engaged, beginning with Austria, the Empire, Prussia, Spain, Great Britain, Genoa, Modena, Sardinia, Venice, Rome, Naples, Tuscany, Russia, and the Porte. The kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden, though never directly engaged in the war, had nevertheless, as *neutral powers*, received so many *flagrant and violent aggressions and acts of oppression* in the course of the war, that they had very recently been under the necessity of *withdrawing* their respective Ambassadors from Paris, and might now be said to be the next door to a state of hostility with them! It would appear to me, Sir, extremely strange that all this should be the work of *chance!* It seems strange to me that *any man could be so blind as not to perceive, that it was in fact attributable solely to the*

nature and genius of the revolution ; which was formed of those abominable, disorganizing and jacobinical principles, that struck directly at the root of every regular government, and threatened destruction to all social and civilized order ! This, Sir, I have no hesitation to declare, is the fact ; and it is particularly requisite, that in examining and discussing the present question, this House should look with a scrutinizing eye to the peculiar character of that government, whose principles and practice are so peculiarly adverse to the peace of all other countries. Sir, it is only necessary for me to advert to their own proceedings, since the present government was established, to shew you the situation in which they conceive themselves to have been from the commencement of the revolution. They acknowledge, Sir, that till the fourth of November last, no preceding government had ever had the power to make peace with any degree of security to other nations. This, Sir, is not my report of them ; it is their own ; it is the report of the very men who vested the power of government in the hands of the very person with whom it now remains. What, Sir, am I to collect from this ? Is the revolution now at an end ? No, Sir, by no means. It may, perhaps, in one respect, be said to be so. The present government is certainly very different from all which preceded it, so far as relates to the Executive part ; but the municipalities, and all the subordinate offices of the republic, are on the same footing as in the time of Robespierre ; and from them the same seditious, turbulent and jacobinical doctrines may again burst forth. The only single difference which now exists is, that all the tyranny is concentrated in Bonaparte himself ! In its democratic, as

well as its *oligarchic* shape, no doubt the *jacobinical* government is at an end, in point of form ; but in substance and essence, all the other qualities of the revolutionary government are as much in force at this moment, as they were in the days of *Barrere* and *Robespierre* !

What then the peculiar nature of the change that has recently taken place may be—whether it be for the better or for the worse with respect to the people of France themselves, I shall leave others to decide. But if we consider *the change* in relation to other governments, and the degree of confidence which *they* ought to place in the future conduct of France, the only difference that I see between the present and any of her former governments, is this ; that the others were derived from republican assemblies representing the people ; and though the people always, and those assemblies often, were nothing but the blind instruments of the Executive, the appearance of the constitution was still preserved ; whereas all this is now at an end. Form and substance are all now concentrated and consolidated in the hands of *Bonaparte* ; and the government now stands with a military despot at its head, with unlimited power and authority, to revive the practice of forced loans and requisitions ; to wield the force of the state as he pleases ; and resort to all the resources of the revolutionary government. Upon this question I may expect to hear, if, as I have stated on the authority of the French themselves, there were no security afforded by the government of France for a faithful observance of treaties with other nations previous to the month of November last, whither it has afforded any since ? and here I contend, if gentlemen will take a review of that interval, and all the circum-

stances attending it, that they will *not* find a single security in the *present* government of that country, which was not *possessed* by all those that preceded it, and have been condemned as defective in that particular. Under these circumstances, recent overtures are made for opening a negotiation for peace. This proposition his Majesty's Ministers have thought proper to *reject*; assigning, at the same time, as a reason; that as all the former attempts made for that purpose had proved abortive; or, if unsuccessful, were followed by violation; nothing yet presented itself, arising out of the *present* revolution, that promised any other termination to any negotiation which we might now enter upon, or afford greater security than *what we possessed before*. To these observations I cheerfully subscribe. In the first place, we are *not* certain of the *sincerity of the overture*; and secondly, if we were, there is nothing of *stability* yet acquired by the present government, to *satisfy us*, that, if *sincere*, it affords security for the *observance of treaty*. This then is the outline of the argument I mean to pursue; and I wish the House to consider, whether it would be consistent with the line of conduct which it has uniformly followed and justified, by the dreadful expence of blood and treasure to which we are indebted for our present situation, to risk it, by entering into a negotiation with a government of which we have had no experience, and which affords no security, that we are aware of, beyond any that preceded it. Laying aside then all personal considerations of Bonaparte, but viewing his government, in a general and abstract point of view, as a recent assumption of power, I ask, what are the circumstances of confidence that it affords? What are the grounds on which we have se-

curity for the due observance of a treaty, in the event of its conclusion? To ascertain these points, we must resort to the power with which we have to deal, for a criterion by which to try the question.

In doing so, sometimes we are decided by the character of the King of a country; sometimes by the conduct of his Ministers; and sometimes by the general conduct and character of the Government; but is there any one of these criteria to be found in the present case? Is there any of its Ministers, or any thing in the Executive or Government of the country, of sufficient standing to afford any of these criteria?

If then, in the present instance, we have none of those rules by which experience enables us to judge in treating with other powers; all rests upon the assertion of the party himself; declaring that he is of a pacific disposition; accredited, it is true, by his minister Talleyrand—for to him he has referred, as appears from the correspondence, to vouch for this pacific character! It is not this country's business, however, to judge the private character and conduct of Bonaparte. He is the repository of the power of France; and it is only as connected with that situation, we feel an interest in his disposition. In this view then I shall consider it; and here let it be understood, that it is far from my intention to enter into any abuse or railing against the character of Bonaparte; I disavow any such intention. At the same time I must confess, I have an old national prejudice about me, so far influencing my judgment, as to make me feel that a person who BLASPHEMES his GOD, and CRUELLY OPPRESSES HIS FELLOW CREATURES, is not exactly the description of man to whose care I

would commit the affairs of a great nation! But any feeling of this kind I readily wave; and I wish only to consider him in the character in which he forces himself upon the House, namely, as *professing a pacific disposition, and proposing a negotiation for peace*. I say, I am bound to consider *the character of the man*, as connected with his *proposal*, before I can feel sufficient inducement to tempt me to enter into negotiation. Sir, I put the question to the House, then, whether the person who represents himself as of a pacific character, and commits himself as a lover of peace, be that sort of man to whom I can look for *sincerity* in his proposition of a negotiation for peace, or *fidelity* in the event of a successful issue? With regard to the first, I shall not enter into the history of the countries with which France has been concerned in a variety of transactions, executed through the medium of other agents and ministers. *I shall refer merely to the cases in which Bonaparte has been the only agent, the scenes in which he has been the sole performer*: I shall not place to his account the contribution imposed on Hamburgh, nor the conduct observed by France towards Spain and Portugal; but I shall refer you to the Cisalpine republic, Naples, Venice, Genoa, Tuscany, and Sardinia; *for in the case of all these, the conduct of France was the conduct of Bonaparte himself*! With regard to Venice, *what was his conduct to that state?* He entered it on the faith of a previous proclamation; avowing that his sole object was to protect it from falling under the power of Austria. What was his *first* act? The dissolution of its government. What was his *second*? His surrender of it to the very power against which he declared his

only object was to afford it protection. What were the circumstances of *his conduct* with respect to the *Cisalpine republic*? A proposal of a treaty of commerce and alliance was made to it by France, which the government of that republic had the *audacity* to decline; and for this *free and just exercise of its rights*, the persons who exercised it *were immediately punished by Bonaparte*. With regard to *Malta*, we have *never* heard of any *aggression* committed by *her* against France, any *ground or pretence* of hostility; yet the attack upon that island was open, and that attack conducted by *Bonaparte*! The whole of this question would embrace a variety of instances of *fraud and unprovoked aggression* too numerous to detail; but I shall select only such as immediately apply to the proper object. *What then, I ask, has been the conduct of Bonaparte with regard to France?*

It is not pretended that there was any aggression on the part of the Ottoman Porte; but *what has been the conduct of Bonaparte?* His last act, before he left that country, was to send a memorial to the Grand Vizier, stating, that he came to it *without any hostile intention*; that his only object was to relieve him from the tyranny of the Beys, and that he had only to desire him to withdraw with his army, and the order should be instantly obeyed; but *what does this man, who makes such pacific and friendly professions to the Grand Vizier, say, when writing to General Kleber?* He desires him “to enter into a negotiation with the Ottoman Porte, but “to endeavour to prevent the evacuation of the country “by the army until after a general peace [*a cry of hear!* “*hear!*] that he might still preserve a chance of retaining that country.” We have this man stated as

a lover of peace ; yet all this unprecedented conduct to the Ottoman Porte, the old friend and ally of France, is the conduct of Bonaparte, *who, in his proposal for negotiation, plays the double dealer with that government to whom he professes sincere attachment ; while the instructions to the respectable officer whom he leaves behind, are of a quite contrary import ?* These are the *views of his character*, of the most recent parts of his conduct, that I wish to consider ; I regard him in the character in which *he wishes to be understood, as a negotiator for peace*, and fancy the House has anticipated me in the inference which I mean to draw from them. *This inference is, that by the Late Revolution, we are deprived of all the criteria of sincerity and fidelity, which we ought to find in a power with which we would negotiate ; and are obliged to rest on the sole character of the French Consul himself ; with this disadvantage and strong objection to it, that there is not a single case on record, in which he has not violated his faith ! and I state it again, and I am ready to prove, that in all this catalogue of crime, he himself has been the actor in the principal parts ; and that not only when acting under the order of government, but from the uninfluenced impulse of his own mind, and the dictates of his own conscience, in both which capacities he appears in the several transactions alluded to, in all of which he has conducted himself in utter contempt of faith or friendship. If I am right in stating these facts, the conclusion I draw from them is, that we should be sure there was something more of sincerity in the negotiation which he proposes, than characterised that which he entered into with the Ottoman Porte ; that there should be some proof arising out of his con-*

dict, in the transactions with which he was connected, to evince a truly pacific disposition, but unfortunately nothing of this kind is to be found; *the current runs the other way.* In short there is not a single step on which you can set foot *that you do not find marked with hostility and breach of faith.*

But it has been said, *why not make the experiment?* if it should not succeed, we shall be just where we were before. This language, I know, has been held out of doors. But I ask, does any gentleman who hears me *seriously* mean to say, that *in the present relative situation of Europe, this would be an experiment perfectly innocent in its nature?* If we have succeeded in the last campaign in calling forth the exertions of foreign powers, in exciting the energies of Europe, and in making the most illustrious efforts---if we have reason to be proud of the share we have contributed to these achievements, is it a matter of indifference to dissolve that connection to which they owe their birth, and to send the other nations of Europe scrambling for a peace, deserted and abandoned by us, their allies? Is this, I say, a matter of indifference? and yet this would be the first effect of an acceptance of the overture. But this question I shall leave to others to decide. *I shall only contend, that without something to rest upon for sincerity in the proposal, and fidelity in the observance, it would be a degree of insanity to open a negotiation.* On this point I may be told, that the *present reduced state of France* affords an ample security; but this is a double-edged weapon, that may cut both ways. *The weakness of France may produce a desire for negotiation, for the purpose of gaining time, recruiting*

her strength, and assuming a more formidable attitude ; but it affords no proof of a desire, when her private views shall be attained, to conclude the negotiation when entered upon, or to observe it when concluded. Are we then, I ask, to stretch out our hands to nurse and uphold the usurpation of Bonaparte ; to assist him to consolidate his power, and to become the instruments of his strength, that we may see it, when opportunity shall occur, turned against the powers that created it ? Sir, before this line of conduct shall be adopted, I hope Ministers will pause and weigh well the consequences to which it would lead. It is a dangerous experiment ; and the moment it is made, there is an end of all the bright hopes which we feel, and have tempted him to make the offer. I therefore contend that there is no force in this argument. But it may be said, in case Bonaparte should not be sincere, are you in a worse situation than you were with the antient line of French princes ? The difference between the two cases is as great as between light and darkness. I do not contend that the House of Bourbon was not actuated by a spirit of aggrandizement ; but how and in what manner has that spirit shewed itself, and been brought forward in action ? Has this been effected under the antient line of princes, by the passions of the lowest classes of the people ; by dissolving all the bonds of society, by bearing down all principles ? These were not the engines resorted to by the old government of France ; yet it was in this manner, and under these circumstances, the French revolution has commenced its attack upon other nations.

Sir, it is not France in arms that I dread, but I dread a government founded upon principles which afford no secu-

rity to other nations. This government must therefore be overthrown, or its powers so reduced as to incapacitate it from wantonly injuring others. It is only in one of these two cases that this country can be brought to treat with France. The former I should prefer; for in the latter case we must never be off our guard, but keep the eyes of an Argus on her constitution. Such are the principles that arise out of her present purer unadulterated jacobinical government. But I shall be told that, according to this argument, we can have no peace with France, unless under a Prince of the House of Bourbon. This argument has been often stated and re-stated, and as often misrepresented. But now we have it upon record, where it is stated, that however desirable such an event, *the restoration of royalty in France is not the only security which we would accept against that government by which the world has been so much disturbed.* The gentlemen have the text before them, and may make whatever comments their ingenuity can suggest. But I may be asked, why prefer the antient government? The answer is two-fold. First, because we know the worst of the former government. *We met it before; we should know how to meet it again.* The second reason is, because I should be extremely sorry that any government should prove stable which is founded on the principles of the French REVOLUTION, as the security of all nations call out loudly against such an example; and it would be of the most dangerous consequence, were the nations of Europe to see, notwithstanding the combined opposition of various powers, a successful usurpation, founded upon those principles which constitute the peculiar spirit, the heart's blood I may say, of this revolutionary go-

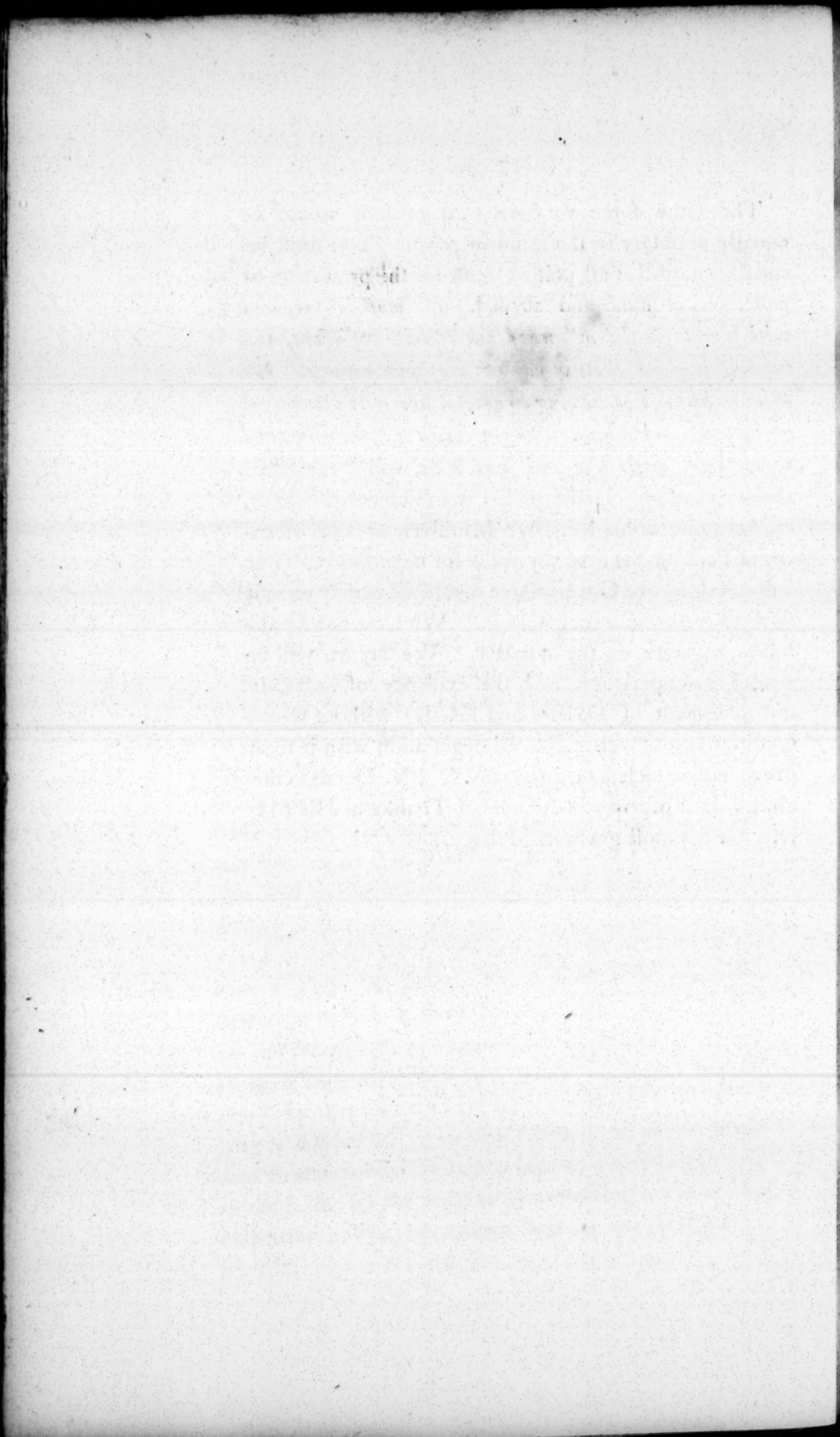
vernment. I observe this revolutionary government; for I do not think it comparable with any other revolution of which I have ever heard. As to the revolution in this country, it was against the *person of the Sovereign, who had violated his engagements; but when the grievance complained of was removed, was there any question about principles?* It is true, some persons insinuated to Lord Somers, that it was a good opportunity to effect some other changes; but the answer of that great man was, *that sufficient was done by the redress already afforded; and nothing further was attempted. But how unlike is this to a revolution, which has torn up all principles by the root; which has broken all the bonds of society; that is contaminated and stained with all the vices of the French republic?* I say, therefore, that it is the wish of my heart that *no* revolution, founded on *such* principles, should prosper. I do not confine it to the case of such a revolution deposing a monarchy; but if the government of France had been of any other form, and had been set aside by a jacobinical government [*Hear, hear!*], my objection to it would be equally strong. This is my statement. Sir, there is another topic mentioned in the official note, to the following purport: You have, it says, already wished to enter into negotiation with the republic of France; why then decline it now? *It does not follow, that because a measure might be prudent at one time, it must be so always; for it has been observed, that the treaty of Campo Formio has been productive of more blood and devastation than any other event of the present day. But I do not rely on this as an answer. I do admit, that within these ten years past, this country has twice entered into negotia-*

tion with France ; once at Paris, and once at Lisle : but I contend, that there was no part of Administration that was not deeply impressed with a sense of danger at the time, in the event of such negotiation proving successful ; that the feelings of Ministers were repugnant to the measure ; *and that the government of the country would have found that a treaty, if concluded, would have proved a calamity !* But notwithstanding this view of the subject entertained by Ministers, there were many collateral circumstances which forced them to the measure ; and which I aver they met with perfect sincerity ; determined, if possible, to obtain peace, even foreseeing its dangers, and inutility. The *body* of the country allowed themselves to be *deluded by false fears and speculations*, that a longer continuance of war would induce insupportable taxes ; that our resources must quickly be exhausted ; and that it was prudent to try whether a peace might not be had on reasonable terms, to save us from the inevitable ruin which we dreaded from war. The attempt was therefore made, and proved unsuccessful : but let us not sacrifice the honour of the country, by adopting such a line of conduct. *Let us not depress its spirit, and degrade ourselves, or be so stupid as not to learn wisdom from experience.*

For what did *that attempt*, which is now urged as a proper rule by which to regulate our conduct, prove ? It proved *that there was no sincerity on the part of France in the course of the negotiation ; for concessions were made by us, yielding every thing that a power that was not implacable could wish, and yet they did not satisfy.* I need not mention what passed at Paris ; at Lisle, greater

terms were offered; *but not all these were deemed sufficient.* Has then the government of France, I ask, changed since? Has not the expedition to Egypt and Switzerland happened *since*? And are not all these sufficient to decide the question of *sincerity*, and that *repose is not the real object*? Under these circumstances, I contend there is no remedy but *the overthrow of such a government, or its weakness and inability to disturb the tranquillity of other states.* Sir, let me ask whether, in the event of a peace having been *then* made, we should *now be at war*? [*hear, hear!*], and whether the correspondence with the Irish rebellion would not have *gone on just as it has since done*? But I ask another question. Can there be a doubt that the expedition to Egypt would not have taken place? It is true there is no national treaty binding us to that country; yet I believe there is no man who hears me, who believes, had that event taken place, we could now be at peace; I say there is not one, unless he can prove that we should sacrifice our most valuable possessions to France. *No man will rejoice more than I do, when peace and tranquillity shall return: but in proportion as I wish for it, I must be anxious for its permanence, to avoid becoming the dupe of fallacious hopes.* Sir, I have only one topic more, on which I shall be very brief. *If at present we had successfully terminated negotiations, if the treaty of peace were actually signed, would you venture to disarm?* Is there a man here who would advise his Majesty to *disband his forces and dismantle his navy*? How does Prussia stand? She has to support a very large army in the field, for the purpose of protecting a line of demarcation. We have also a line of demarcation to protect.

The same force we have now on foot would be equally necessary in the midst of peace. You must be equally guarded at all points, both for the protection of possessions at home and abroad. *We must be prepared with troops for the defence of our colonial possessions, and we must keep our fleets in pay for the same purpose. We should otherwise be leaving France at liberty to act against all Europe, and against some powers in it which are, and ought to be, most near and dear to us, whilst our hands would be tied up.* Under these circumstances, I cannot, either as one of his Majesty's Ministers, or as a Member of Parliament, give my voice for negotiation. For I do not think the Government would act wisely were it now to enter into negotiation. We have put no absolute negative on the question. We say we will be guided by experience, and the evidence of facts, in our judgment of *sincerity* and *fidelity*; without which qualities in a Government, all negotiation with it must prove either useless or injurious." Mr. Dundas concluded with moving an Address of Thanks to His Majesty for his most gracious Message.



MR. DUNDAS'S SPEECH,

On Monday, February 11th, 1800,

AGAINST

THE MOTION OF MR. SHERIDAN,

“ THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO A
“ COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE, TO EN-
“ QUIRE INTO THE CAUSES OF THE FAILURE
“ OF THE LATE EXPEDITION TO HOLLAND.”

SIR,

I RISE to assign my reasons to the consideration of the House, why I cannot give my consent to the honourable gentleman's motion. In so doing, I shall endeavour to take up as small a portion of their time as I possibly can, though I must beg leave to entreat their attention, while I take notice of the various topics introduced by the honourable gentleman in the course of his very animated and eloquent speech. The honourable gentleman has told us, Sir, that by this motion for an inquiry, *he has not in view the smallest censure of His Majesty's Ministers* ; nor is their removal from their official

situations at all the object of his motion. Sir, this *may* be all very true; but I think I can clearly shew, and in a very few words, what the honourable gentleman's object is, and I will endeavour to define it. But previous to this, I shall only remark, that many of the topics which the honourable gentleman has brought forward in the course of his speech for an Inquiry into the Expedition to Holland, such topics I shall not have occasion to go over in detail. Many topics also which are *usually* brought forward upon occasions of a similar nature to this, were omitted by the honourable gentleman, in the course of his speech to-night. It has been *usual* for gentlemen who move for inquiries into Expeditions, to profess that they feel it *necessary*, in vindication of the honour of the country, to express a resentment against Ministers for the crimes they have committed; and to expose their incapacity, as it has been sometimes called, and to state their unfitness for the offices they fill, by way of clearing a passage for their removal. For it is not unfair to urge the necessity of removing those who are incapable of performing their duty. These are commonly held out as the objects of inquiry into expeditions, or into any other subjects which are to be imputed to His Majesty's Ministers as the effect of their counsel. This is a course which the honourable gentleman has not followed. On the contrary, he disclaims the idea of following up the success of his motion for inquiry, should he succeed, with any motion for the removal of His Majesty's Ministers. And now for the honourable gentleman's object. It is

not many nights since those with whom that honourable gentleman agrees in political sentiments, exerted their powers to prevail upon this House to refuse to continue the war against France. Their attempts were made with all the vigour and animation which men usually employ when they are in earnest, and consider themselves in the right. The House heard them with attention—considered their arguments with candour, and *decided that we should not, at present, enter into a negotiation with France* ; but conveyed an opinion to the world that we thought the war should be carried on with vigour. *What* then does the honourable gentleman propose to this House? *Not* that His Majesty's Ministers should be removed, *but* that the House should *deprive them of all confidence in the country, and, of course, of all vigour for carrying on the war* ; that is not, indeed, the language of his motion, but it would be the *effect* of it, if the motion were successful ; for it would be the cause of withdrawing from them the confidence of this House, which must cripple, if not altogether stop them, in the progress of the war. I know not what might be said to be the object ; but I know that this would be the effect of the honourable gentleman's succeeding in the motion now before the House. That being the only effect of the success of his motion, the honourable gentleman will not be surprized if I take another view of the question now before you ; and, before I proceed to any other matter, *state what was the object of the late expedition to Holland*—then proceed to the consideration of other topics, namely, wherein it has succeeded, wherein it has failed, and to what that failure is owing ; or in other

words, why that expedition was not completely successful, according to the objects which His Majesty's Ministers had in view, when the plan of it was adopted. This is the course which I intend pursuing in this discussion ; and there are many parts of the speech of the honourable gentleman which I will not enter upon in the detail, some of which applied to a supposed alliance between the Courts of Austria, Russia, and Great Britain. The honourable gentleman made some mistakes upon that subject, as to the manner in which that alliance was endeavoured to be enforced. I mention these things only cursorily, because they have no real bearing on the subject now before the House. I admit to him, we wished for the aid of Russian troops in the late expedition. I admit that we thought their assistance essential : I go farther, and say, *I think it essential to the interest of this Country and of Europe, that a good understanding should be kept up between this Country and Russia ;* and therefore, if the honourable gentleman intended to provoke me into a disquisition that shall call in question, or tend to lessen the cordiality that at present subsists between Great Britain and Russia, the honourable gentleman must be totally disappointed ; and *if, in any part of the inquiry which is proposed by this motion, there was likely to be introduced even a suggestion that might tend to create any misunderstanding between this Country and Russia, or any thing to create a jealousy between their armies ; that would be, with me, a strong reason for opposing this motion.* Having dismissed this part of the subject, I shall now state the *object* of the expedition to Holland. It was to

rescue Holland from the tyranny of the French yoke—an object which has never ceased to operate upon the councils of this country ever since Holland was over-run. But to come more closely to the point—I admit, that from the Spring of last year it was an object which attracted the particular attention of His Majesty's Ministers in a particular manner, and determined upon. I shall farther admit, that this determination on our part, upon an expedition to Holland, was known to the French Government; and this appears by several authentic papers of theirs, whereby it is stated they knew that preparations were going forwards, which rendered it proper for them to reinforce their army in other quarters, and that they particularly thought they should do so in Holland. Having said this, I shall now proceed, according to my promise, to state the object of the expedition. It was threefold—First, to rescue the United Provinces from the tyranny of the French—Secondly, to add to the efficient force of this country, and to diminish that of the enemy, by getting possession of the Dutch fleet, so as to render it of no use to the enemy, by whom it was kept with a view of aiding that enemy in a plan for a descent on some part of His Majesty's dominions.—Thirdly, to endeavour, as far as we could, to divert the enemy from its projected pursuits in general, by hostile operations in Holland on our part, thereby to defeat the plans of the enemy in the course of the campaign, whether they chose to remain in Holland or not.—These three different objects were in contemplation when the expedition was agreed on; and there was, give me leave to say, a great probability, at that time, that all the three

objects would be successful ; *two* of them did succeed, and only *one* of them failed, and for which I shall shortly assign to you a sufficient reason. I shall now proceed to state what I feel with regard to the first part of the general object which I have already stated to be threefold—I mean that of rescuing the United States from the galling yoke of the French tyranny.—I should have thought it was hardly necessary to argue, in this House, on the wisdom and policy of rescuing Holland from that yoke. I should at any time have thought this a point which it was unnecessary to argue, *for that it must at all times have been felt in this country as a great national object.* This, indeed, was admitted by the honourable gentleman himself, who, by the way, accompanied it with a little affectation of candour ; for he was pleased to bestow some praise on what he called the wisdom and policy of His Majesty's Ministers, for rescuing Holland from the tyranny of the French. I thought, that as he set out with this as a matter of praise to His Majesty's Government, he intended to follow a course different from that which he did follow ; but I was a little surprised, indeed I was almost astonished, to find him directly wheel about, and then make a very able and eloquent address, the obvious purpose of which was to tell Holland this story :
 ‘ However wise it was in Great Britain to endeavour to
 ‘ rescue you, be you aware of the English—who are
 ‘ they ? They are those who endeavoured to destroy
 ‘ you in the course of the American war. They take
 ‘ your possessions, but they will never restore them to
 ‘ you. If ever they shall hereafter remove the French

‘ yoke from off your necks, I warn you against such friends : Be on your guard against them. This is my advice to you as a British Senator.’— This is the substance of the language of the honourable gentleman, and it was founded on transactions which took place during the American war ; and the honourable gentleman ought to have recollected, that all these atrocious grievances by which it has pleased him to *tarnish* the character of his country, and of which he so *kindly* reminds Holland, were committed before the year 1787 ; and yet during that year this country was successful in bringing about a Revolution in Holland, which the honourable gentleman recommended highly. This I take leave to call an answer to much of the reasoning of the honourable gentleman upon this part of the subject, and, what is best of all, *an answer from himself*. Why did the Dutch submit to that Revolution ? Why did you interfere to accomplish it ? To rescue Holland from the yoke of the House of Bourbon. Was it *more* criminal in us to attempt to rescue the same Provinces from the yoke of the French Republic ? Or was it more criminal in us to attempt the same thing, as was endeavoured by the King of Prussia, and finally accomplished ; I mean the rescuing Holland from the tyranny of the House of Bourbon ? The honourable gentleman *admits the propriety of interfering to prevent the tyranny of the House of Bourbon ; but allows no such attempt to be made against the French Republic*. In the one case, Prussia did that in concert with Great Britain which the honourable gentleman applauds. In the other, Great

Britain attempts the same thing alone, which the honourable gentleman condemns. Where am I to look for the honourable gentleman's real sentiments, either that Holland should be rescued or not? *I say, I wish to rescue Holland from the tyranny of France; whether Monarchical France, or Republican, is to me no object.* I say it is the policy of this country to rescue Holland from the gripe of France; and this is *no new* policy in this country: it was adopted by the wisest politicians of this country, from the earliest period of its connection with Holland, down to the present time. To prove this, I will read what has been laid down as the creed of this country with regard to its connection with Holland; and it is as far back as the year 1585, when a State Paper was published, well known in the history of this country, and, indeed, in the history of Europe—it relates to the relative interests of Holland and this country, and was penned by Cecil, Minister to Queen Elizabeth; the substance of which is, *that Queen Elizabeth thought it the policy of England to give assistance to the Dutch, and to prevent their being overpowered by the Spaniards.* It is under three distinct heads: First, The Deliverance of the Dutch from the War with the Spaniards. Secondly, That all Christian People in the choice of their Religion should be free. Thirdly, That the People of Holland and the Low Countries shall enjoy their Commerce and Intercourse, as between the Queen's Progenitors and the People of the Low Countries, &c. was observed. This was the policy of the time of Queen Elizabeth, and we see that Queen Elizabeth interfered in favour of the

Dutch against the Spaniards. It was then thought, that if the Low Countries were *not* in the hands of the Dutch, *the commerce of all Europe, and particularly of this country, would be materially injured.* This was a policy which was never lost sight of during the whole of the long reign of that illustrious Princess. King William followed exactly the same policy, and it has been observed uniformly during the reign of the House of Brunswick ; a policy that was never called in question by any administration that was esteemed for its wisdom, since the days of Elizabeth, as I have already stated to you. I merely refer to this document, the authenticity, as well as state policy of which has long been received in the general history of Europe, to shew how long this policy had obtained. I, therefore, need not dwell upon the proposition—"That it is the interest of this country not to suffer Holland to be under the yoke of France."

There are, indeed, exceptions to this policy in this country, in the reign of King James, under some bad Administrations ; but no good politician has ever doubted of the imprudence of that counsel, during the better part of the last century, and up to the present time. I flatter myself, therefore, I need not say any more to carry the House along with me in this proposition, "*that if there was any prospect of success, the object of rescuing the Dutch from the French yoke, was an object worth pursuit.*" The next object I have to take notice of is, that of *our taking possession of the Dutch fleet, to diminish the power of Holland, or rather to diminish the power of France ;* and indeed I did not expect, even from the versatility of the

honourable gentleman, any thing like a dispute of this doctrine ; or that there should have been any thing like a doubt cast upon the great value of the accomplishment of this part of the expedition. But the honourable gentleman seems to hesitate upon the value of it ; in which, however, he has the candour to confess he is singular in his opinion.—*What has the Dutch fleet been destined to for the greater part of this war ? For more than one half of it, they have been supposed to be destined to the employment of carrying into effect the threatened invasion of the Northern and Eastern part of the coast of this country.* I never heard of any body doubting but *the French intended making use of the Dutch fleet for the purpose of making that attempt ;* and although I never felt any alarming apprehensions on that subject, yet I do not think that depriving your enemy of the possibility of making even the attempt, is a trifling object ; and the honourable gentleman cannot forget what was apprehended some time ago upon this point in the north of Ireland. We have heard it frequently said, *that if any hostile fleet appeared on our northern coast in Ireland, it could come no where but from the Texel—is it therefore nothing to extinguish all hope of the enemy upon this subject ?*—Besides, we took between 6 and 7,000 seamen of the Dutch, all of whom were liable, at any time, by requisition or other force, to be employed in the service of the French fleet. We took also 40,000 tons of shipping belonging to the enemy, which might have annoyed our commerce. Viewing these things as they really are, *that the Dutch fleet was one of the objects of the expedition ;*

I say, therefore, that great, material, and essential service was performed to this country by that expedition.—We have transferred the Dutch fleet from the *Dutch* to the *English* coast; so far, therefore, I say, *that the expedition has obtained complete success.* A third object of the expedition was, that this country should co-operate in the general plan against the enemy, a plan in which we and all our allies were equally engaged, and on which it was our duty, as well as interest, to do every thing in our power. I believe I am not saying too much when I say it was a question with France, for a while, whether it was better for her to use much of her strength to prevent us from recovering Holland, or that she should use all her power to reinforce her armies in different parts of Europe? She at last determined to reinforce her power in Holland. Does the honourable gentleman mean to say, that her withdrawing from the general plan of the campaign 40,000 of her men, was not withdrawing, in the first place, in conjunction with the Dutch fleet, all chance of an attack upon our own coast? Was it not making a great diversion of their force, and so far disappointing their scheme? I say, *that this expedition kept them in a state of suspense with regard to the distribution of the force,* of which we felt the beneficial effects in the course of the campaign, in various parts of Europe. What was the case at the battle of Novi? The House remembers the particulars of that battle, and therefore I need not recite them. I shall only observe, that it was the most bloody, as well as the most doubtful, between the Austrians and the French, in the whole

campaign, and it was the cause or foundation of the recovery of all Italy from the grasp of the French Republic ; it decided the fate of Tortona and Coni. If this be so, I would ask, *whether this success would have taken place, on the part of the allies, if the expedition to Holland had not taken place ?* Nor is this all : the effect was also felt at Suabia, after which the Archduke was enabled to proceed with vigour against the French. Or if you take notice of Massena in Switzerland, you will see the advantage the allies have gained ; and this, I say again, is an illustration of *the advantages you have gained by this expedition to Holland ;* for I say they are to be ascribed to the *necessity* to which the French were driven to employ 40,000 of their men to reinforce their power in Holland. It has given *decision* to the Imperial arms almost all over Europe ; at Novi, at Suabia, at Tortona, at Coni, and at Philippsburgh. I have stated that the object of the campaign, or of the expedition to Holland, was three-fold ; I have stated that *two* of the objects out of the three were completely successful ; *that it was the object of the expedition to assist our allies, and to transfer the power of the enemy in the ports of Holland to the ports of this country,* by which the French are completely deprived of the co-operation of the Dutch fleet. The honourable gentleman says, that this was no great gain to us ; because the seamen in the Dutch fleet were not well affected to the Government under which they were stationed ; and he assigns as a proof of it, that they rose against their officers ; but *when I recollect that this was the very fleet that fought Lord Duncan,* I think

that much could not be built upon their disaffection, if we had to fight them, besides that their mutinous disposition was not to be depended upon ; and I am sure this country would have acted a very unwise part, if it did not *take care that their dispositions, whatever they are, should be secured in our ports, instead of being in the ports of Holland.* The next question is, whether we could have had any chance of rescuing Holland from the tyranny of France, in case the French had followed the plan of the campaign formerly adopted by them in the different parts of Europe ? Now, upon that subject, I do say, that the French could not have prevented our recovering Holland, if they had not made such prodigious reinforcements in Holland ; and it was a matter of great doubt what policy the French would adopt at the moment our expedition was undertaken ; whether they would reinforce the power in Holland, or employ all their means of reinforcement in other parts of the Continent, for the purposes of the campaign. They adopted that of reinforcing their power in Holland ; the result of which was, that we were not able to recover and rescue the United Provinces from the French yoke : *but that was only one part of the result ; another part of it was, that the French lost every other point which they contested in the whole campaign all over Europe.* Now, as to the good which would arise from the inquiry which the honourable gentleman proposes, I shall expressly state my opinion to the House and to the Public at large, without the least apprehension of offending either ; which is, that I am perfectly well satisfied, and the honourable gentleman himself

knows it, that any inquiry into this matter must be defective, for any useful purpose of information, *without exposing every thing with regard to Holland.* It is impossible for us to vindicate ourselves in the shape of an inquiry, because it is absolutely impossible for us to produce the grounds of intelligence on which the expedition was founded. *I do not mean to state, nor do I desire to have it understood, that we did not proceed on intelligence that rendered it proper in us to act as we did; but I do mean to say, that the publication of the whole of that intelligence would be highly improper at this moment, in many respects, and might be highly injurious to the interests of Europe to disclose; and to disclose the intelligence partially would be worse than doing nothing.* It is for the House to say, whether it will desire us to make that disclosure. I state it without any apprehension of any displeasure, either of this House or of the Public; I, for one, shall never concur in advising His Majesty to order that there be laid before this House any such information as this motion seeks to obtain. The honourable gentleman says, the people of Holland were not favourable to us in the object of our expedition—How he can draw that conclusion I cannot say, and I beg leave to annalize his proposition. He says they manifested no signs of their feelings towards us, nor against the French. *A people may have a general feeling, and yet they may not take arms to carry that feeling into effect, until they see that those who come to relieve them are secure of success.* But I am only concurring with almost all mankind, in thinking that the crews of the navy of Holland were disaffected to the Go-

vernment of France, or to those who were acting under its power and influence. The whole fleet of Holland was indisposed to the Government of the country in which they were, according to the admission of the honourable gentleman himself, and that goes a great way towards the probability that the people of Holland had the same feeling. *I take it that the feelings of 6 or 7,000 Dutch seamen, connected as they must be by marriage and consanguinity with the people of Holland, may be taken as a tolerable sample of the feelings of the whole country; nor was any attempt made to drive off the cattle, or other provisions, from the use of the British troops. It may be said, that as our army had money, the Dutch did not wish to remove their goods from the market of such good customers as our men were; but I take it that this is a strong proof there was no disposition towards it.*

These, however, are points upon which, if we argue at all, we must argue on presumption; for there can be no positive proof of the fact. If I were at liberty to give up all confidential communication on this matter, against which I protest, *I think I could convince this House that the disposition of the Dutch was not unfavourable to us.* The honourable gentleman might say, this was only proof of the disposition of some of them, and no proof with regard to the rest. I admit we had no means of knowing the disposition of the Dutch to a man; for we could not call a General Assembly there to collect their sentiments; but I go, as my right honourable friend went on a former occasion, upon the general feeling of human nature, however the honourable gentleman may

affect to ridicule that text; *I say that general feeling teaches me no body of men would continue under the tyranny of the French, if they could help it.* I think a man does not argue very badly when he argues, that a country which has been for a considerable time under that Government, would not remain under it longer than they could help it. Am I speaking upon general supposition only—I appeal to all Italy; to all the South of Europe; for notwithstanding the oath of fidelity of the various states which have been under the arms of France, *yet it appears plainly that they were worried and goaded, and tired under their yoke, so that they hailed the Austrians as their deliverers, when they came.* Why then am I to presume that the Dutch had not the same feelings? *They have been pretty well squeezed by the French. A Dutchman's last shilling has been sweated down almost to a sixpence.* Am I then to suppose that the feeling of a Dutchman is *different* from the feeling of the rest of mankind: or that he has *less* attachment to *his* property than that of any other man? Am I, against the experience of all the world, to say, *that a Dutchman is not tired of a Government under which he is not allowed to keep a shilling?* I leave the House to consider this question of presumption, that the Dutch would, if they had an opportunity, have every disposition to shake off the yoke of France; and then to determine whether His Majesty's Ministers are to be censured for presuming thus far upon the Dutch character.

This leads me to another part of the subject; I do not know whether the honourable gentleman expects

that we should lay before the House the instructions given to Commanders ; I am of opinion that no such instructions can, with any propriety, come before this House. I will tell the honourable gentleman why ; for notwithstanding the awful warning he gives this House if it continues to confide in His Majesty's Ministers, I shall state my opinion freely—*I am not sure it will never come to be the part of the wisdom and policy of this country again to attempt the recovery of Holland.* This is what that honourable gentleman may, if he pleases, tell the country, with all the force of his voice, and with all the eloquence he can employ upon the subject. Another reason with me against giving the instructions to the Commanders is this, that from the very nature of the thing the instructions must contain much *conditional matter*—that, for instance, in one *condition or posture of affairs*, a commander is to act in a given manner, in *another posture or condition of things*, he is to act *possibly the reverse of it*. I ask then, would it be wise that we should expose the *future prospect of the war*, and *the plan of our future operations* ; for that, to a given extent, would be the *result of giving up these instructions*. These are points which hitherto the wisdom of Parliament have entrusted to the discretion of His Majesty's Government ; it is for the House to say whether a different shall now be adopted. Having said this by way of objection to the *principle* of this motion, I shall now proceed to shew you *that this expedition was wisely undertaken*. When this expedition was first formed, I think the honourable gentleman asked, why it was not done at an earlier period ? To which I an-

swer, we had no army to do it with ; the force was collected from all parts of the kingdom, and the most considerable part of it was collected from Ireland. The honourable gentleman himself would hardly have thought it wise to have proceeded in this expedition before the French fleet had sailed from the Mediterranean, had it been possible. Sir Ralph Abercromby sailed on the 13th of August. It speaks for itself, that the object of that first part of the expedition was that of a mere preliminary ; it was to secure a communication between this country and Holland. No man, I presume, will think that an unwise precaution ; at this time we had the prospect of a very large and powerful force from Russia ; we had also a large army out of the militia : at first we had only the force of 10,000 men, *but there was the prospect of a large and powerful co-operation.* It was settled that the Helder was the place of landing ; accordingly Sir Ralph Abercromby sailed for that place on the 13th of August.

On the 13th and 14th of August, which I remember to be on Tuesday and Wednesday, a more prosperous commencement was never known—it promised the most rapid success : but it did so happen, that late on the Wednesday night, or early on the Thursday morning, about one o'clock—I heard it ! and well do I remember it !—there came on the most extraordinary *hurricane* that ever blew from the heavens !—In this situation it was totally impossible to land on any part of the coast of Holland ; and this continued, with the exception of one day only, until the 27th of the month,

before which it was impossible to land a single soldier on the coast of Holland. There was, indeed, some moderate weather on the 21st; so much so, that Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Mitchel anchored off the Helder; but on the following morning, the same hurricane returned, so that no fleet could possibly approach the enemy's shores. What was the effect of all this? *It was that of enabling every body on the enemy's shore to know where we must land; the consequence was, that the troops of the enemy came in shoals to that part of the coast, to oppose the landing of our force. Had they been able to land, as was first calculated they might, they would not have been opposed by 1200 men: this I know; but soon after it was known where we were to land, and where for so many days we could not land, troops were collected in great numbers to oppose us. Upwards of 7000 men were collected to oppose us; so that Sir Ralph Abercromby could not land his men to advantage; in truth, his landing was opposed by a superior force in point of numbers. Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Mitchel had determined not to stay longer than the 26th, on account of the want of water, and from other circumstances; it so happened, however, that they could not sooner land. This was a trying scene!—The ardour of the men, the zeal and gallantry of the Commander, which were never excelled on any occasion, were put to the severest trial! At last, they landed on the 27th; but without the power of landing with them a single field-piece; and indeed without any thing but their muskets and bayonets; and yet they did land against ca-*

valtry, and artillery; and make their landing good! Then I say that, contrary to the common chances of war, and events in general calculation, this landing was made good, and by it the Dutch fleet was secured. I state these things chiefly *to shew how easy it is for men to treat both soldiers and their commanders unjustly, upon an expedition depending upon the temper of the elements; without taking into calculation the state of such elements, and by judging headlong by the event.* The honourable gentleman says, *the troops had no horses to draw their waggons.* They had *no waggons;* and could not possibly land them under such circumstances, if they had intended it. But he will recollect, that instantly on their landing they did not want them; for all they had immediately to do was to secure a landing place, and a port of communication. Till the first of September, Sir Ralph Abercromby had to consider *what position he should take, until a re-inforcement should arrive.* There is no complaint against Sir Ralph Abercromby for the disposition of his army; he judged extremely wisely. I have already stated, *that the delay arose from causes which no human wisdom could foresee, and therefore could not prevent.* Sir Ralph Abercromby, had he been able to land when he expected, would not only have struck the brilliant stroke he did! But, in all human probability, have commanded COMPLETE SUCCESS to ALL the OBJECTS of the EXPEDITION! Yet he could not make his landing good, until the 27th. That is not to be imputed either to the want of prudence in His Majesty's Ministers, the want of skill in the Com-

mander, or to the want of ardour in the troops ; they all did every thing they could, and they could not command the wind and waves. Indeed, I happened to ask a gallant Admiral, whether he thought there was a *chance* of a *tempest* to spoil the expedition ; when, in a stile which is peculiar perhaps to the profession to which he belongs, and to which he does honour, he answered me with perfect contempt,—“ *A hurricane in the month of August ! or any tempest to prevent our landing within three days on the coast of Holland, if we sailed with a fair wind, was perfectly ridiculous !*” However, it happened most unfortunately *that my supposition, improbable as it was, was REALIZED!* It happened also, that *the very same wind which prevented our landing on the coast of Holland, prevented the Russian troops from arriving to reinforce ours !* But the honourable gentleman has stated, that His Majesty’s Ministers knew, on the 2d of September, from the commander abroad, that there was no chance of success. The best answer to that assertion is the PUBLIC letter of Sir Ralph Abercromby himself, which is in these words : “ I hope
 “ that the Duke of York, with all the forces that can
 “ be spared, will arrive immediately ; should that be
 “ the case, we have a reasonable prospect to winter
 “ on the Waal.”

This letter is dated on the 4th of Sept. ; so that the disaster which the honourable gentleman says we ought to have dreaded on the 2d, was not even so much as apprehended on the 4th, in Holland, by Sir Ralph Abercromby himself ! Sir, the Duke of York

arrived in Holland on the 13th of September. It is, I have no doubt, in the recollection of every one, that during all the months of August, September, and October, the weather was most unfavourable to military operations; *the dreadful state of our crops gave us a melancholy remembrance of this!* The Russians, delayed as they had been by the same stormy weather, did *not* land till the 18th. The Duke of York, on the 19th, offered the Russian General D'Herman to delay the attack, which was intended to be made, if he thought his troops were not sufficiently recovered from the fatigues of their voyage; *but General D'Herman earnestly requested the attack might be made, and did it with an arduous alacrity and promptitude which reflected the highest honour upon him. This ardour, however, led that General to the field full two hours sooner than the time appointed!* The army was, however, completely successful till a late hour in the day. Even General D'Herman and his troops were in complete possession of the village of Bergen, and crowned with victory, *till his ardour led him beyond a given point, and turned the fate of the day!*

When the attack, Sir, was made on Sir Ralph Abercromby, on the 10th of August, the French army amounted to *seven* and the Dutch to *twelve* thousand men, *which was a superior force to his.* Yet our gallant troops fought and beat them with a bravery that did them the highest honour. They did the same on the 19th and on the 2d of October. Between the 2d of October and 6th of that month, *French reinforcements continually arrived, and day after day for some time. The*

Duke of York was then INVITED by General Abercromby, and all the other Generals and Officers of his army, to ACCEDE to the TERMS of ARMISTICE, which were, by THAT TIME, MUTUALLY WISHED!—The officers, I believe, Sir, volunteered their advice; but not till after the 2d of October, to fall back to the first strong position. The Duke of York yielded to this advice; and in so doing, it is my opinion that His Royal Highness consulted the interests and happiness of his whole army! and acted, in every respect, according to the true dictates of reason and humanity! And here, once for all, allow me to advert to those various parts of the honourable gentleman's speech, IN WHICH HE BESTOWED MANY ENCOMIUMS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF! Upon THOSE PARTS of the honourable gentleman's speech, I need say nothing more, than THAT EVERY THING HE HAS SAID, IS RICHLY DESERVED BY THE OBJECT OF HIS PRAISE! I AM SURE I SAY SO, WITH EQUAL SINCERITY; AND CERTAINLY WITH MUCH MORE MEANS OF JUDGING THAN THE HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN POSSESSES! Sir, the honourable gentleman has said a great deal of the disgrace which attached to the end of the expedition; but, for my part, I can see nothing disgraceful in it. When I received the letter, informing me of what had taken place on the 6th of October, I did not lose an hour to advise the King to send an immediate approbation of the steps which had been pursued. Where, Sir, I ask, is the

disgrace ? It must consist of something arising out of their conduct ; and than that nothing could be more praiseworthy or deserving of admiration. I will venture to say, Sir, *that no nation was ever more struck with the gallantry of our troops, than the French soldiers themselves who fought against them !* Our army returned home with as much gallantry, bravery, and honour, as when they first entered Holland. This army, when in Holland, consisted of 25,000 men ; it is now increased to 50,000, *all made of the same materials.* I think, Sir, the Duke of YORK was *perfectly right* in signing the convention ; nor could he be wrong in giving up 8000 *lumber* of French troops—*from our overloaded prisons.* These he readily surrendered ; but did *not recede from any one article in which NATIONAL HONOUR was concerned !* He resisted with firmness and indignation every PROPOSITION for the DELIVERING BACK THE FLEET ! These are the true and characteristic features of the question. The Duke of YORK, Sir, was perfectly sensible, that the taking possession of the Dutch fleet, was *one of the Chief Objects of the Expedition.* And, in my mind, *his bringing off the ARMY in the manner he did, was a transaction CHARACTERISTIC OF A MANLY MIND !* He agreed to a Convention, by which he drew himself out of a dilemma.—*There could be no disgrace attending the transaction.—His character, and that of his whole Army and Officers, now stand as high as ever !* The honourable gentleman has attempted to influence the minds and feelings of the House by the consequences which this expedition led to ; by *the quantity of British blood that has been shed,*

and the immense treasure that has been expended on the occasion. I shall add a few more observations. The honourable gentleman has stated that expence to be at a sum not less than six or seven millions; a sum equivalent to the Income Tax, at a tenth part of the national income; but in this he is by no means correct. I suppose he intended it as a figure of eloquence. However, this matter may be easily known; there is no occasion to leave it to the exaggeration of doubt and conjecture. And it will appear so, from the abstract I shall make, in informing the honourable gentleman what *that sum really is*—it is 1,142,000*l.* and considering *this expenditure, even on the grounds of national policy*, computing, by debtor and creditor, there could, in commercial consideration, be no objection to it. Taking it up in this view, I have a right to consider the ships that were taken, and to state the *reduction for the maintenance of a fleet in the North Seas, to check a Dutch fleet*. If you take the *value of the Dutch fleet, the decrease of expence in the maintenance of the North-Sea fleet, and the saving in the pay of ten thousand seamen voted less than last year*, I think, Sir, I may be allowed to say, *the balance is greatly in our favour*. In the article of prisoners, Sir, what have we given up? Why, 8000 French troops; in lieu of which we have gained 6000 Dutch seamen to man our fleets, which, whether they fought under Orange or English colours, would be found a great addition and acquisition to the strength of our navy. Again I repeat it, that the vote for the navy is 10,000 men less than last year, which comes into the account, on fair compu-

tation, and we gave up 8000 French prisoners, whom we annually fed at a great expence. The *objects* gained by the expedition were, *the ships, the reduction of expences, and the great diversion in the French forces, which facilitated the victories of the combined armies.* What the honourable gentleman stated on the loss of British lives, was an address very powerful to the feelings of the House. I shall not outrage, Sir, the feelings of the House, in addressing myself to them on this topic, as to men. I shall not make it a topic of eloquence. I lament, in common, the calamities of war! but as inseparable from such a condition, I cannot but consider them as arising from the situation of a great nation fighting for great objects; and there is no soldier, landed on that coast, I am sure, that would not consider it as a libel, if I counted on such an event as less probable, less certain, than the event determined. If at war, we must lay our account upon it. But the honourable gentleman has endeavoured to work upon our feelings for the army. The honourable gentleman has requested the House to attend to this. I hope, Sir, I feel as properly as any one for the brave soldiers who compose our ARMY; but I know, at the same time, that in war *no great and important objects can be obtained, without the loss of many dear and valuable connections!* And in such a war as this, fighting for our very existence, as a great and independent empire; while we copiously shed the liberal tear of feeling, let us not unnerve, by that tear, the gigantic arm of national defence! *It has been said the expedition was attended with the loss of 10,000 lives.* Those who had

spread the report of the expence being *five millions*, might well be expected to exaggerate the other in an equal proportion. But, Sir, I would not wish it should go abroad that this expedition cost 10,000 men. The expedition was, on estimate, taken at the expence of five millions, and the loss of men at 10,000. To *remove this impression*, the best way would be to state, what the loss was, *really*. I shall now state, in detail, the returns made during the whole of the campaign.

Sick and wounded admitted into the hospitals	-	4,688
Sent home out of these	-	2,993
The whole, who died, amounted only to	-	185
And the whole of the killed to	-	846

As to the returns, they were made up in a hurry, and of course subject to misrepresentation; and many, reported to be dead, were afterwards found upon their legs, and well.—But should any gentleman wish to be farther informed, he may be satisfied by applying to Mr. Young, the gentleman who superintended the hospital. And I ought not to name that gentleman, without saying that there is no praise, or reward, to which he is not entitled. It must give every gentleman of feeling much real satisfaction to be undeceived on this point, when he can fairly substitute, in the place of 10,000 slain, only, at most, the comparatively small number of 846, down to the 1st of February. This is a list certainly sufficient to excite the sensation of sorrow and regret in every feeling bosom, but which I have the satisfaction of adding, fell infinitely short of the injurious report so industriously circulated. *I shall repeat, that no*

man could possibly feel more mortified at the death of every soldier than myself; but I am confident our British heroes would feel indignant, if, in a question of the first national importance, individual loss was suffered to weigh against the general interests of the country! Upon a review, therefore, of the whole affair, I must object to all public military criticism on any part of military operations. This was a consideration which did not fall, in any shape, within the scope of the honourable gentleman's charge. I feel it my duty to resist a Motion of Inquiry, which could not be productive of any actual benefit; at the same time, that it might considerably clog and harass the measures of Government.

THE END.



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